
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Property Address:	3500 Connecticut Avenue, NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Cleveland Park Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	November 17, 2022	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	22-374	X	Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	Steve Callcott		New Construction
			Demolition

Chris Klug, representing owner Mark Bucher and Medium Rare restaurant, returns to the Board with revised plans (prepared by AM Structures), seeking conceptual design review for construction of an aluminum, motorized pergola structure in public space over an existing outdoor café.

When the Board reviewed a proposal for a pergola at this location in July, it found the structure incompatible with the character of these buildings and the Cleveland Park Historic District. The Board noted that the applicant could apply for a different concept in the future, and strongly recommended that the applicant go through the ANC review process before coming back to the Board.

Property History and Description

3500 is the end unit of a Georgian Revival styled coordinated row of ten buildings (3500-3518) that were originally constructed as rowhouses in 1921 by developer Harry Wardman. By the early 1940s, their ground floors had been converted to retail use, altered with projecting metal storefronts with Colonial Revival detailing sympathetic to the original rowhouse designs. A rehabilitation in the early 2000s resulted in restoration and recreation of the 1940s storefronts, as well as installation of several larger, two-story storefronts. The row is cited in the National Register nomination for the Cleveland Park Historic District:

Wardman's second project, 3500-3518 Connecticut and 2815-19 Ordway, (1/21/1921) took a decidedly different approach [*to his first project at 3520 Connecticut*]. The three-story red brick building, with white trim, on Connecticut Avenue was conceived of as a long low block with a central organizing theme based upon Colonial Georgian precedents, especially the five-part houses in Annapolis. The building is divided into five sections, the central section, of three bays, projects as do the two end sections, of two bays each. The central section is given prominence by its larger size and by the brick pediment with a central fan light which dominates the roof line. There are ten units, each with its own separate entrance, giving this long low building a decidedly domestic appearance. There is no added ornamentation. The organization of the building into projecting and receding sections with the emphasis on the central section, and the use of contrasting white trim reminiscent of the Wren influence on Colonial Georgian architecture, provide the stylistic definition.

Revised Proposal

When presented in July, the plans called for an aluminum framed pergola measuring 12' deep x 60' wide x 12' 9" tall, supported by 8" x 8" square posts. The relationship of the pergola to the clear pedestrian path of the sidewalk and to the elevation of the building was not entirely clear, but it appeared to directly abut and be taller than the projecting storefront windows.

The proposal has been revised to include thinner support posts (reduced two inches to 6" x 6") and lowered to align with the crown molding of the storefront windows (7'6" clear height, 8'4" total height). The structure would also be pulled away from the face of the storefront by 2'6", allowing a clear pedestrian sidewalk of approximately 9'6". The width of the structure has been reduced from 60' to 47' to align with the extent of the business's storefront windows, and the posts spaced to align with the ends of the storefronts and one in the center of the larger window.

As before, the structure would have ceiling fans, recessed LED lights, and a motorized louvered roof that would allow it to be open or closed. The existing heating elements mounted on the projecting storefronts would be removed and reinstalled within the new structure.

Evaluation

The dimensions of the revised proposal were field tested with the applicant, HPO and a member of the Cleveland Park Architectural Review Committee, and the result is clearer and an improvement in its relationship to the existing buildings. The lowered height, thinner post proportions, the alignment of the posts with the buildings' elevation, and the space provided between the buildings and the pergola will allow the structure to read as separate from but clearly related to the historic buildings. While the pergola would ideally be located further away from the buildings to provide a greater distinction and open views of the facades of the historic buildings, the proposed space is about as much as it can be and still provide for the applicant's desired structure.

If approved, this would be the first instance of this type of metal pergola being installed in front of contributing buildings in an historic district. [The only other similar pergola structures approved by the Board are in front of much larger, non-contributing buildings at 1320 19th Street NW in Dupont Circle and 360 7th Street SE in Capitol Hill.] If the Board is inclined to approve this structure in front of small-scale contributing buildings, it is recommended that it be approved as a single test case for the Board to review upon its completion to determine its visual appropriateness rather than establishing a new city-wide precedent.

Recommendation

HPO seeks the Board's determination on the compatibility of the revised pergola structure with the character of these buildings and the Cleveland Park Historic District.



The inner posts would be located 2'6" from the face of the storefront windows.



The outer posts would be located 9'6" back from the street tree planting beds.

